**The Ring of Gyges**

*Socrates and Glaucon, Plato’s brother, are having a lively discussion on morality and human ethics. In order to make a point, Glaucon relays to Socrates an old story about a shepherd who discovered a powerful, magic ring.*

“According to the tradition, Gyges was a shepherd in the service of the king of Lydia; there was a great storm, and an earthquake made an opening in the earth at the place where he was feeding his flock. Amazed at the sight, he descended into the opening, where, among other marvel, be heheld a hollow brazen horse.

The horse had doors, at which, when stooping down and looking, saw a dead body of stature, as appeared to him, more than human, and having nothing on but a gold ring. He took the ring from the finger of the dead and climbed back out. Now the shepherds met together, according to custom, that they might send their monthly report about the flocks to the king. Gyges came into the assembly with the ring on his finger, and as he was sitting among them he chanced to turn the decorative front of the ring inside his hand, when instantly he became invisible to the rest of the shepherds and they began to speak about him as if he were no longer present.

He was astonished at this, and again touching the ring he turned the decoration outwards and reappeared. He made several trials of the ring, and always with the same result—when he turned the decoration inward he became invisible, when he turned it outwards, he reappeared. Whereupon he decided to be chosen as one of the messengers who would go to the royal court. As soon as he arrived he seduced the queen, and with her help conspired against the king and slew him, and took the kingdom.